

America. House Republicans have accomplished more to combat crime in 40 days than the Democrats have in the last 40 years. We are committed to keeping our promises.

Republicans promised to strike at the heart of violent crime. We are working to pass our back-to-basic crime bill which provides the tools necessary to fight crime and keep criminals behind bars.

The Republican crime package handcuffs criminals and releases resources to combat crime. We are replacing the revolving door with a trap door and making our streets safe for law abiding citizens.

American taxpayers will no longer pay for a criminal justice system that fails to put and keep criminals behind bars. Today we will work to deport criminal aliens and free up scarce prison space. In addition, I look forward to giving local law enforcement the flexibility they need to use their resources most effectively.

Mr. Speaker, the American people are waiting for action. Violent crime will no longer be tolerated. We must act now to give the police the tools necessary to catch criminals and the space they need to keep them where they belong—behind bars.

LULAC NATIONAL WEEK

HON. RONALD D. COLEMAN

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 13, 1995

Mr. COLEMAN. Mr. Speaker, I wish to pay tribute to the League of United Latin American Citizens as they celebrate the week of the 12th through the 18th of February, 1995, as LULAC National Week.

LULAC, the oldest and largest Hispanic volunteer organization in the country, is an American success story. More than 110,000 members in 45 States have reaped the benefits of this exemplary organization since 1929.

This week honors the LULAC experience. From its roots in promoting civil rights to its activities in providing equal access to educational opportunities for all Hispanic-Americans, LULAC is committed to the promise of Hispanics in America.

This week we observe and honor the benefits of LULAC which include economic development, housing, education, employment, civil rights, and business development. My congressional district includes many LULAC chapters all striving to address the many complex issues impacting Hispanics at all levels.

Mr. Speaker, as LULAC celebrates its legacy this week, the organization is seen as an integral part of the American mosaic. Since 1929, LULAC has endured with honor and a proven record of success. Its proud supporters include the public and private sectors and other volunteer organizations. Today, its proudest supporters, the members themselves, look to the future for more of the same. LULAC has earned the support and respect of the Nation.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. JACK METCALF

OF WASHINGTON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 13, 1995

Mr. METCALF. Mr. Speaker, due to prior travel commitments I missed the final vote on H.R. 668. If I had been present, I would have voted "yes."

READ A BOOK OR GO TO JAIL

HON. BARNEY FRANK

OF MASSACHUSETTS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Monday, February 13, 1995

Mr. FRANK of Massachusetts. Mr. Speaker, in the February 5 issue of Parade Magazine there is an excellent article by Michael Ryan about the sort of program we all describe as something we would to see, but are rarely able to point to in fact.

The program in question is one which seeks to keep repeat criminals from committing further crimes, by a program which involves repeat offenders in an extensive reading program.

Of course no program is perfect, and in 4 years this program has seen 19 percent of the participants rearrested. But as the article points out, the statistical expectation is that, absent this program, a far higher percentage of these participants would have been arrested again—one study showed that 45 percent would be the expected figure.

The moving force in this program is Prof. Robert Waxler of the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. I have myself benefited in my job from the enthusiasm and knowledge that Professor Waxler brings to the task of educating young people, because he is an active and creative member of the southeastern Massachusetts community. But I ask that this article be reprinted here not because of my admiration for Professor Waxler but because it is an interesting example of how creative work on the local level can help us improve our efforts to reduce the crime which is a continuing social problem.

Professor Waxler, and Judge Robert Kane, who has used his judicial position to launch this program, deserve a great deal of credit. And I am glad that Parade Magazine highlighted their work, and I hope that other areas will profit by their example. To further that prospect, I submit this article from Parade magazine to be reprinted here.

[From Parade Magazine, Feb. 5, 1995]

THESE REPEAT OFFENDERS HAD A CHOICE:

READ A BOOK—OR GO TO JAIL

(By Michael Ryan)

Every university has students like Don Ross: bright individuals whose imaginations have caught fire with learning.

"Yesterday, everybody at my job was talking about Deliverance." Ross told me one afternoon at the University of Massachusetts campus at Dartmouth, Mass., near Cape Cod. He recently had read James Dickey's novel, a riveting tale of survival. "I started talking about how the characters related to each other, and everybody looked at me and went, 'Whoa.' They were talking about the movie, which was on TV."

Ross, 27, tells this joke on himself with good humor, as amused with his newfound

interest in literature as anyone else. The interest has unusual roots. In January 1992, a judge in nearly New Bedford offered him a choice: Go to school and read books—or go to jail.

"This was an experiment," said District Court Judge Robert Kane, 47. "I had no confidence that it would work, but I had sufficient despair in the way we had always done things." "We were seeing this same faces over and over," added Wayne St. Pierre, 39, the probation officer who helps screen candidates for the program. Don Ross is one of just 100 repeat offenders who have entered the program. (His last offense involved the illegal use of uninsured automobiles.)

In the four years that the literature seminar has been in operation, 19 percent of its participants have been rearrested. A recent study by professors at the University of Indiana and UMass Dartmouth found that 45 percent of a similar group (matched by age, race, income, neighborhood and offense) had returned to crime. In other words, the convicts in the program were less than half as likely to commit new crimes as those not in the program.

"I have always believed in the transformative power of stories," Prof. Robert Waxler, 50, told me. "They allow us to hold up a mirror to ourselves." A professor of English at UMass Dartmouth, he thought this power might help in rehabilitating criminals. One day, he brought up the idea with Judge Kane, his tennis partner. "He was very receptive to the idea," Waxler recalled.

Waxler volunteered to lead a 12-week literature seminar. His only stipulation that the convicts be fairly serious offenders. "The average participant has 16 prior offenses," said St. Pierre.

The group first reads a simple short story. Then, every other week for three months, they read novels of increasing complexity and meet for two-hour discussions. Only about half of the participants have completed high school or earned GED's, but Waxler gives them serious reading, such as Jack London's Sea Wolf and Russell Banks Affliction.

St. Pierre thinks that the challenge is part of the success. "I come from an athletic background," he said. "I know that when you have a tough coach who pushes you beyond what you think you can do, the rewards are much greater. That's what happens here."

"When I first designed this, I looked for materials that would address issues of identity, of violence, of the individual's relationship to society," Waxler explained. "Often, that pushes everybody to an understanding of where they fall in relation to that character."

"I related to Wolf Larsen in Sea Wolf," said Manuel Amaral, 35, a former drug addict and small-time dealer. The Larsen character is a brutal ship's captain who meets a grisly end. "I was like him," said Amaral. "Reading about it opened my mind." Amaral is now drug-free and a student at Bristol Community College in Fall River, Mass.

The reading program has benefited more than the defendants. Along with Waxler and some of his colleagues, St. Pierre attends every session and does all of the reading. Judge Kane also attends but begins with the third session to avoid intimidating students.

"One night, we were reading Norman Mailer's An American Dream," the judge recalled. "There's a scene between a judge and a prostitute, and the people in the course started talking about the misuse of judicial power. I realized that it was important that I hear that. It has made me more expansive."

Mark MacMullen, 40, also was a drug abuser. Now he is a full-time student at